REMARKS

In the Official Action mailed on **20 April 2007**, the Examiner reviewed claims 1-21. Claims 1-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Seaman (USPN 6,611,502 hereinafter "Seaman").

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-21 were rejected as being anticipated by Seaman. Applicant respectfully points out that Seaman discloses a technique for improving the propagation of information about topology changes in bridges. Seamen **involves logic that expires and re-computes the configuration information** for one or more ports in a bridge **in response to the detection of a link failure** (see col. 4, lines 63-67 and claim 2 of Seamen).

In contrast, embodiments of the present invention **monitor ports to determine when messages are lost by the ports due to temporary network conditions** (see paragraphs [0029-0030] and FIG. 3 of the instant application). In some cases temporary network conditions, such as network congestion caused by a bridge with insufficient computing capabilities, can cause a spanning tree protocol to incorrectly forward messages using additional ports of a network bridge. This can cause loops, which can dramatically increase the amount of congestion to a point that the spanning tree protocol never recovers. Embodiments of the present invention address this issue by monitoring bridge ports, and, when a message is lost by such a port, waiting to forward any additional messages to or from the port until no messages are lost by the port for a sufficient amount of time. The described system thereby ensures that subsequent spanning tree configuration messages are received on the port and ensures that the port will not erroneously forward messages as the result of spanning tree configuration messages being lost. Furthermore, the described system delays the activation of additional bridge ports for forwarding messages when lost messages

are detected. Hence, the described system reduces the likelihood that loops will be erroneously generated by the spanning tree protocol.

Applicant respectfully points out that Seaman teaches against embodiments of the present invention. Seaman discloses techniques for increasing the speed with which topology changes propagate across a network and hence prompt spanning tree re-configuration. Moreover, applicant respectfully points out that nothing in Seaman discloses handling temporary network conditions.

Accordingly, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 8, and 15 to clarify that the described system monitors ports coupled to the bridge to determine when messages are lost by a port due to temporary network conditions. The described system then refrains from forwarding messages to the port that is losing messages until the port no longer loses messages for an amount of time. By refraining from forwarding messages to or from the port until no messages are lost for the amount of time, the described system prevents the spanning tree protocol from creating loops because of the temporary network conditions. These amendments find support from paragraphs [0025]-[0030] and FIG. 3 of the instant application. No new matter has been added.

Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 8, and 15 as presently amended are in condition for allowance. Applicant also submits that claims 2-7, which depend upon claim 1, claims 9-14, which depend upon claim 8, and claims 16-21, which depend upon claim 15, are for the same reasons in condition for allowance and for reasons of the unique combinations recited in such claims.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the present application is presently in form for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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